

VOL. 2 • NO. 1 • SUMMER 2010

**INTRODUCTION**

3

---

Alan McMahan, General Editor

Today as I write this introduction, the state of Arizona's new laws regarding immigration enforcement goes into effect. Protestors to these new laws are assembled in the streets of Phoenix and busloads more are en route from Los Angeles in order to show support for the rights of those who may "appear" to be undocumented immigrants. Tensions are high as a majority of Americans who believe something must be done to curb illegal immigration square off against others who believe that the kind of enforcements efforts proposed by the Arizona law are discriminatory, unjust, or racist.

Now, as never before, the phenomenon of global migration is prominent in the news as nations grapple with the implications and realities of the largest movement of people in world history. Fueled by disparities in standards of living, economic and educational opportunity, oppressive regimes, persecution or war, international migration has accelerated to unprecedented levels. These modern diasporas of the world's people offers new challenges and opportunities for mission and ministry demanding a re-thinking of traditional methods of evangelism, church growth, and missions. This edition of the *Great Commission Research Journal* spotlights these new trends and suggests points of engagement. Though these issues are not new to the field of evangelism research, the way that they need to be addressed will

require new approaches, new partnerships, and new ways of thinking if the greatest harvest is to be realized.

Opening up the dialogue in this edition of the *Journal* is Enoch Wan's article on global demographic trends and the development of "diaspora missiology." Moving easily from phenomenological description, to theological reflection, to missiological application, Wan challenges traditional ways of conceptualizing the task, territorial notions of mission, and the dichotomistic paradigms of thought that now run contrary to the new realities being encountered in the cities and suburbs. Calling for new accountability and stewardship, Wan further develops a distinctive diaspora missiology to reveal the need for new approaches and stimulate innovative new efforts.

4 With Enoch Wan's appeal in place, J.D. Payne goes on to detail by way of statistics the magnitude of international immigration not only as a global trend but particularly as it is manifesting itself in Canada and the United States. While urban dwellers are perhaps more acutely aware of the increasingly heterogeneous populations of the cities, J.D.'s article demonstrates that the impact of international migration eventually will be felt by the average church and community throughout North America. The challenge will be to find ways to minister effectively within these new patterns rather than simply create ethnic churches or assume they will assimilate into majority culture communities of faith.

The next article, written by Ivan Chung, reveals the strategic opportunity of ministry among and through international students studying in North America. While some churches have sought to serve the needs of foreign students studying in the U.S. fewer have utilized the international linkages these students bring for their foreign missions endeavors, or understood the value they bring to local congregations here. As Ivan correctly indicates, these students may include mature Christian leaders who are already experienced in effective evangelism and cross-cultural ministry. Much can be learned from these sojourners that will help free congregations from their own cultural captivity and myopic thinking.

Gary McIntosh's article shifts the focus from diaspora evangelism to consider the various church movements that have defined the dominant ministry approaches of the last 50 years. If the terms of church growth, church health, the emergent church and the missional church are confusing, this article will help you navigate the differences between them.

The next two articles focus more specifically on the matter of evangelism that is at the heart of Great Commission thinking. Jeff Walters examines the theology of evangelism as understood by the founder of the Church Growth movement, Donald McGavran. The study that follows traces the influences of McGavran's

missionary and denominational heritage as well as his later educational pursuits and shows how they shaped his theology of evangelism followed by a short analysis and critique. Adam Greenway explores the usefulness of apologetics in evangelistic conversations and differentiates between intellectual unbelief, in its active and passive forms, and volitional unbelief. By showing the various contributors to unbelief, the mind's role in the conversion process, and consequently the value of apologetics, becomes clearer.

Two more articles highlight research issues related to church planting. Francis Lonsway and Hutz Hertzberg's second article in a two-part series<sup>1</sup> further explores the research conducted on the characteristics of effective church planters in North America. In the first part of the article, a recap of prior research projects on this subject are surveyed while the second part focuses on the findings emerging from Hertzberg's more recent (2008) doctoral research in the field. Interesting differences between church planters and graduating seminarians are noted and suggestions are offered on how to further improve on these results in future projects.

5

Elizabeth Childs Drury, addressing a frequently neglected topic in the literature of church leadership uses a case study approach to discuss the problems arising from leadership transfer in a multi-ethnic church of which she was a part. Dipping into the literature on missiology, church planting and the multi-cultural church she introduces a helpful model to address the "four quiet dilemmas" frequently experienced by those who navigate the complex interactions of a multi-cultural church.

Speaking to another leadership challenge, Katie Dudgeon provides a helpful study on the scriptural support for strategic planning in ministry. Contrary to frequent criticisms and the lack of attention planning receives in many churches Dudgeon convincingly argues that faith-based planning is necessary if churches are to practice good stewardship and obtain maximum results in ministry.

In his article, Michael Wilson grapples with the problem of how to mobilize passive church attenders to engage in efforts of evangelism and church multiplication. In his efforts with Asian Access in Japan he is convinced that this difficulty stems from "a basic misunderstanding of how believers are transformed from self-centered unbelievers to 'fully devoted followers of Christ.'" He goes on to suggest a model that employs three types of learning in cognitive knowledge, personal character, and skill competence to teach the new believer in ways that front-loaded methods of preaching and classroom teaching do not. This

---

<sup>1</sup> The first part of this report was published in the Summer 2009 issue of the *Great Commission Research Journal*.

multi-pronged approach, he believes, produces better results to engage members of the congregation into outreach.

Reading through the next two sections in the Journal will introduce you to a wider array of resources that our editors have found helpful. J.D. Payne has assembled eight different book reviews that range through important and related topics of evangelism, leadership, and missiology. With his fine team of book reviewers you will be exposed to additional resources that will help you think critically about the issues related to Great Commission effectiveness. In like manner our dissertation editor, Gary McIntosh briefly explores nine dissertations or theses that will expose you to the research being conducted by our leading theological institutions in the area of church planting. The case studies and projects recorded here will give you a better understanding about the people God calls into church multiplication ministries and the contexts in which they work.

6 The research that is offered in these pages is in line with the best traditions of church growth missiology in which McGavran and others felt that the harvest field and harvest force must be studied if we are to be good stewards of the task that our Master has given us. Maximum effectiveness in ministry is achieved when we thoughtfully respond to what God is doing. It is our hope that you will be inspired, instructed, and illuminated as you encounter the wisdom found in these pages. May God stretch you as you think through these issues with the result of more fruitful service!